



Patient Feedback Annual Report 2021-2022

Produced August 2022

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01387 272 733, by email at dg.patientservices.nhs.scot
or via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#).

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Foreword



Welcome to the patient feedback annual report for 2021-22. We are grateful for the time taken by people to share their experiences with us, and the annual report provides a good opportunity for us to reflect on those stories together.

We continue to face unprecedented challenges in the NHS, both locally and nationally and the kind words that we have received from patients, Carers and families provides such a boost to staff during these difficult times. We have shared a small sample of that positive feedback on page 7.

We know that there are also times where we could have done better and it is always disappointing to hear that someone has had a poor experience of our services. We appreciate the efforts made by people to share those stories with us and we are committed to learning from them. We have shared some of that learning in this report to demonstrate how we use your feedback to improve.

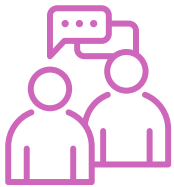
We want to make it as easy as possible for people to share their experiences with us and with that in mind, we are looking to utilise Care Opinion further in the coming year to help with that. The report shares more information on those plans which I am excited to see develop. We also welcome people to contact us by phone, email or webform. If you would like to share your experience, our website details the ways in which you can do so:

www.nhsdg.co.uk/how-did-we-do

Thank you.

Jeff Ace, Chief Executive

Encouraging and Gathering Feedback



There are a variety of ways people can share their feedback with us, including by post, webform, email, social media, phone or via ContactScotland BSL. People can speak to us face to face during appointments, events or meetings, or virtually over video calls. If people require support to contact us, or do not wish to speak to us direct, they can use the Patient Advice and Support Service or Care Opinion to share their feedback.



What We're Doing Well

- We have a wide variety of feedback mechanisms, which are well publicised.
- Our feedback leaflet is available in multiple languages.
- We have a dedicated section on our website for feedback.

Where We Can Improve

- We have been looking at how we could better use technology to assist with the gathering of feedback. As a result of that work we will be introducing Patient Feedback iPads in 2022/23. You can read more about these on page 8.

2021-22 at a Glance

138 Compliments

We recorded **138** compliments for excellent care and treatment. This is in addition to the hundreds of thank you cards and messages teams received directly.



436 Complaints

We received **436** complaints, which is an increase on the 323 last year but remains below the 500 received during 2019-20.



181 Concerns

We received **181** concerns, which is more than the 147 received during the previous year.



56 Care Opinion Stories

We received **56** Care Opinion stories, which were read **14,446** times. Whilst we received fewer stories than the previous year, we received significantly more story views.



Training

We introduced **Managing Conflict** training for staff to help them build on their dispute resolution skills.



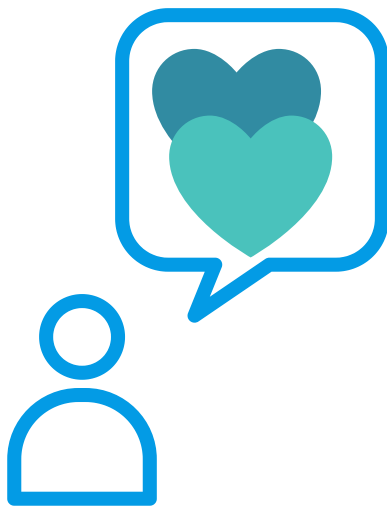
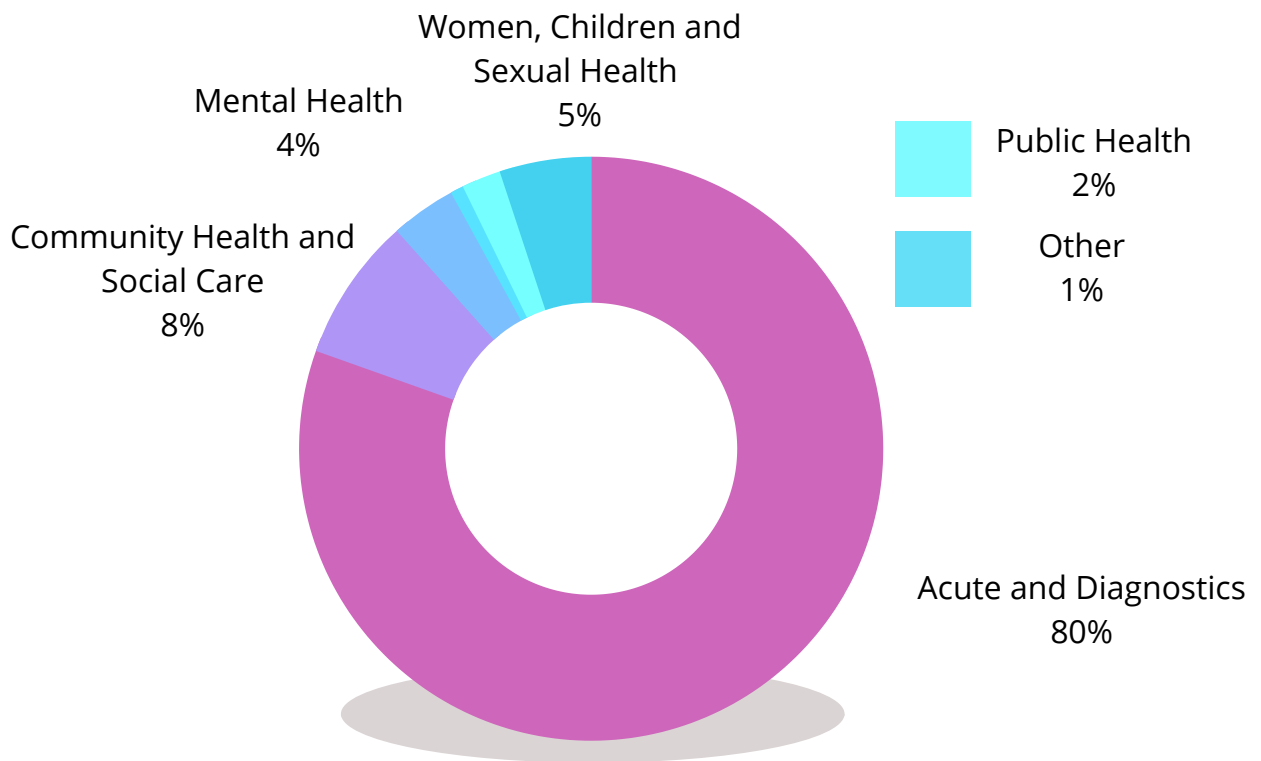
26 SPSO Cases

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) contacted us about **26** cases.



Compliments

The majority of the compliments we receive relate to Acute and Diagnostics, which is our largest Directorate.



The majority of the positive feedback we received was complimenting the quality of care and treatment. Some compliments detailed several areas of excellence and others were more general in nature.

A number of compliments recognised the pressures that services were under and were grateful for the time taken to continue to provide compassionate care under those circumstances.

We Welcome Your Feedback

Compliments

'I would like to thank the community mental health occupational therapist. An extremely knowledgeable and professional member of staff... a great asset to the service.'

'I honestly can't praise the NHS in Dumfries enough.'

'I recently had to attend A& E at Dumfries Infirmary... I was dealt with by all of the staff in a kind, very quick and courteous way. I am very grateful to all the staff, particularly the doctor that was on duty who wasted no time getting me the treatment that I needed. I would like to thank all the staff for their care and professionalism. They probably saved my life.'

'I would like to thank the nurse in ICU. My loved one sadly passed away suddenly and the way in which the nurse communicated that to our family was compassionate and caring.'

'I am blown away by the treatment I received during my recent breast cancer diagnosis. All the staff in Dumfries were very kind and caring and made me feel at ease... I feel so lucky that we have such a fantastic workforce in our NHS '

'The whole experience was very positive - from easy car parking to helpful reception staff to a great medical consultation. It's brilliant that the hospital can provide such a good experience during a pandemic.'

'...mere words are insufficient to express how greatly impressed I was with the exceptionally high standards of compassion, empathy, professionalism, and all-encompassing care I witnessed daily when visiting my loved one in hospital. The praise is not limited to nurses, but to the friendliness of receptionists, cleaners and to those working behind the scenes to prepare the meals.'

We Welcome Your Feedback

Care Opinion

Care Opinion is an online approach, which enables the public to provide and view feedback on our services. When a story is added to Care Opinion the relevant staff are alerted so that they can view the feedback and respond as required.

56
Stories were shared on the Care Opinion website

Our stories were read
14,446
times

We replied to **95%** of stories

64%
of stories shared were positive



Share your story at
www.careopinion.org.uk

14%
of stories shared were significantly critical

The majority of the feedback the Board receives through Care Opinion is positive. When a story is critical, the author is invited to make direct contact in order that we can provide further advice and support to resolve any issues raised. The below details some of the most frequently used words and phrases from our 2021-22 stories.

Communication

Caring **Understanding**

Wait for Appointments **Let Down**

Explanations **Reassuring** **Compassion**

Scheduling **Listened** **Staff Attitude** **Reliable**

Access **Friendly** **Kindness** **Helped me**

Informative **Sympathetic** **Unfriendly**

Complaints

The Board is required to report performance against nine statutory indicators in relation to complaints. A summary of performance against each indicator is included below.

Indicator 1 - Learning from Complaints

Feedback provides a valuable opportunity for us to learn from the experiences of our patients, service users, carers and visitors. As well as our local commitment to learning and improving, we are also obliged to identify, record and report on learning under our Performance Indicators.

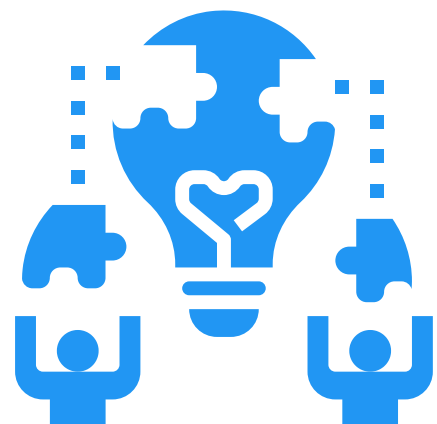
What We're Doing Well

- Services are encouraged to identify learning from all upheld and partially upheld complaints.
- Learning from complex and SPSO complaints is considered by our Patient Safety Group to help identify wider improvement opportunities.
- We use the same learning summary template to capture learning from both complaints and adverse events, which helps bring consistency to our approach.

Where We Can Improve

- There is still scope to improve how we identify, share and act on learning. This is a challenge across Health Boards in Scotland and we are working together with national partners to identify ways we can address this.
- We have access to lots of information about patient experience that goes beyond feedback e.g. from adverse events. There are opportunities for us to improve how we analyse that information.

The following pages detail our approach to learning and some of the improvements we have made in response to the feedback received over 2021/22.



We Welcome Your Feedback

Learning from Complaints

Learning is one of the key outcomes sought when people complain. They often tell us that they want to ensure the organisation improves as a result of their feedback.

Teams use Learning Summary templates to capture and share learning from patient feedback.

For complex complaints, 'Multi-Disciplinary' meetings are organised to allow a team approach to investigating the complaint and identifying learning.

Directorates discuss complaints regularly at their management team meetings.

Details of learning and improvement actions are shared in complaint response letters.



Complex complaints are shared with our Patient Safety Group to aid wider organisational learning.

We look for opportunities to learn from our handling of complaints as well as learning from the issues raised.

We work with colleagues in other Boards to identify ways in which we could collectively improve our approach to learning.

We have purchased new software to help us better analyse themes and trends from patient feedback and other sources of patient experience data.

We are training staff in 'Managing Conflict' with a focus on working with patients and families to resolve any issues at the earliest opportunity.

Learning from Complaints

A number of people told us that the CRISIS service in Mental Health could improve how they engage with families in situations where a patient has capacity.



A communication plan has been developed to address the areas for improvement identified by families.

Feedback told us that relatives were experiencing difficulty when trying to reach the ward by telephone.



We introduced a new pathway for outside calls to our wards whereby the calls are now directed to the ward clerk, who will provide the caller with the information they require, direct the call to an appropriate person or arrange for a return call where possible.

Feedback showed that communication with families could be better when Mental Health are investigating a Significant Adverse Event (SAER).



The Quality Improvement Lead is supporting the team to review these processes and identify improvements. A number of actions are already underway, including the introduction of a 'single point of contact' to support families during the SAER process.

Learning from Complaints

We were alerted that it had been the experience of some families that we failed to appropriately assess patient capacity to understand or retain information.

We provided relevant education for teams and updated the clinical handbook to ensure that it contained appropriate information and guidance.

We were informed that some patients found the attitude of some staff to be unsatisfactory during telephone conversations.

We provided training on how to improve handling of challenging conversations and how to manage conflict in order to improve understanding of why challenging situations can occur and the most appropriate way to behave during these situations.

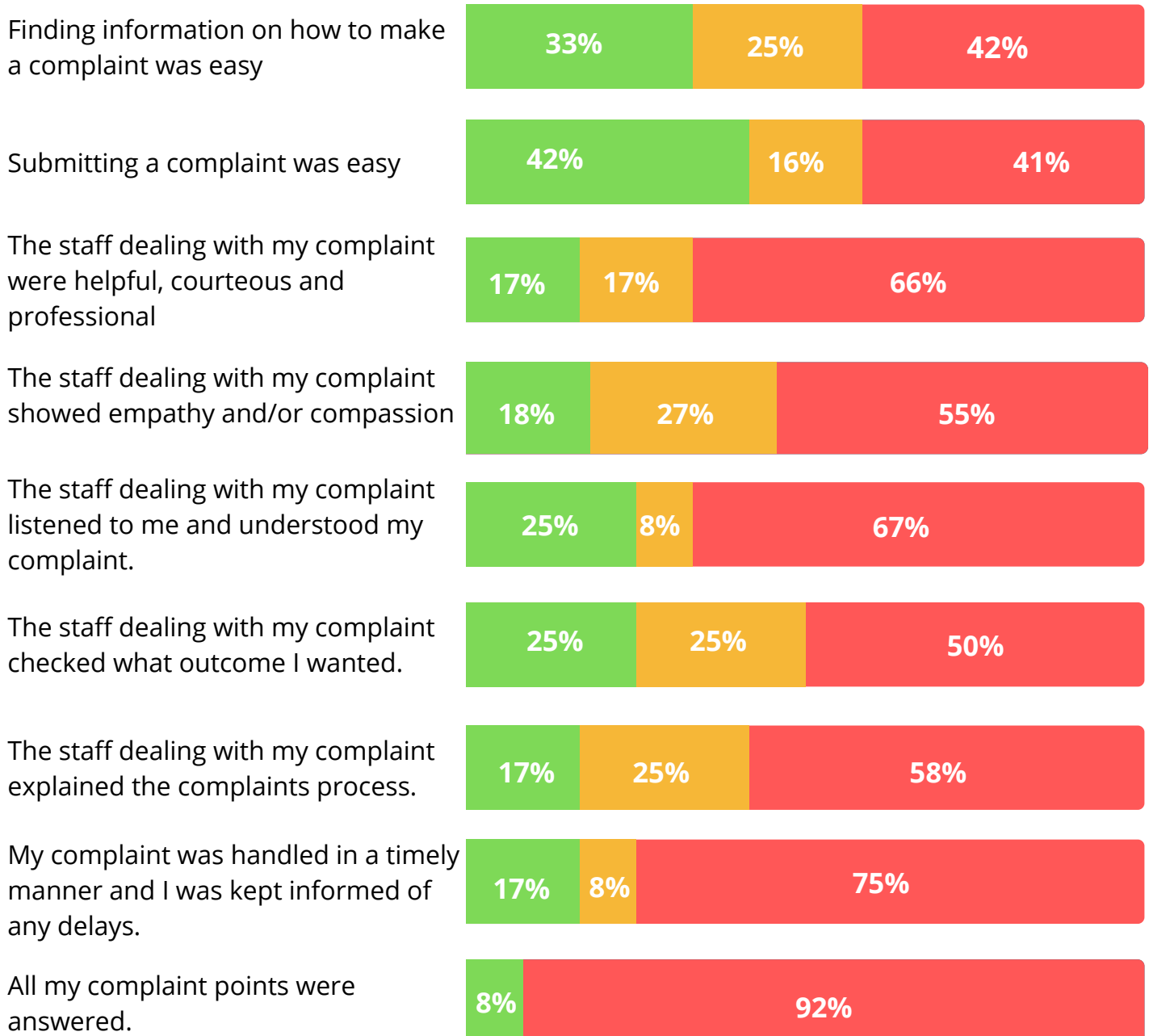
We were made aware that there had been a delay in providing some patients with appropriate treatment for osteoporosis.

We provided education for our teams and refreshed the guidance provided in the handbook used by our clinicians.

Complaints

Indicator 2 - Complaints Process Experience

People are invited to share their experience of the complaints process when we send a complaint response letter. Our survey questions are based on the suggested themes in the model Complaints Handling Procedure from the SPSO and are consistent with the questions being asked by other Boards. We received 13 survey responses during the period, with feedback as follows:



We Welcome Your Feedback

Complaints Process Experience

KEY

Agree

Neither

Disagree

N/A

It was clear what the outcome of my complaint was.

33%

67%

The reasons for the outcome were clear.

17%

25%

58%

I was offered an apology by the staff involved in dealing with my complaint.

8%

8%

84%

Overall, the complaint response was easy to read and understand.

42%

25%

33%



At the end of the survey, people are invited to share what they feel we did well in relation to our complaints handling and where we can improve. We received comments from 10 people:

What We're Doing Well

- Keeping people informed of delays.
- Offering solutions to issues.
- Responding quickly.

Some people expressed that they felt we did nothing well during the process, indicating they were unhappy with both the handling of their complaint and the outcome

Where We Can Improve

- Respond quicker.
- Make legitimate attempts to improve.
- Listen to what people are saying.

Some people requested improvements linked to their personal circumstances and/or care plan e.g. a particular course of treatment.

Whilst feedback was only provided by a small number of people, their answers help us to reflect on our complaints handling. We recognise that some aspects of the process could be better and we will review our approach with a view to further improving in 2022/23.

Complaints

Indicator 3 - Staff Awareness and Training

Training remained significantly scaled back over 2021/22 as staff continued to focus on the pressures associated with the pandemic. For those courses that were delivered, the format continued to be largely online training, with feedback suggesting that worked well.

A number of teams were supported to better utilise Care Opinion for gathering feedback about their services.

We delivered 20 'Managing Conflict' training sessions.

Patient Services complaints staff undertook 'Trauma Informed' training.



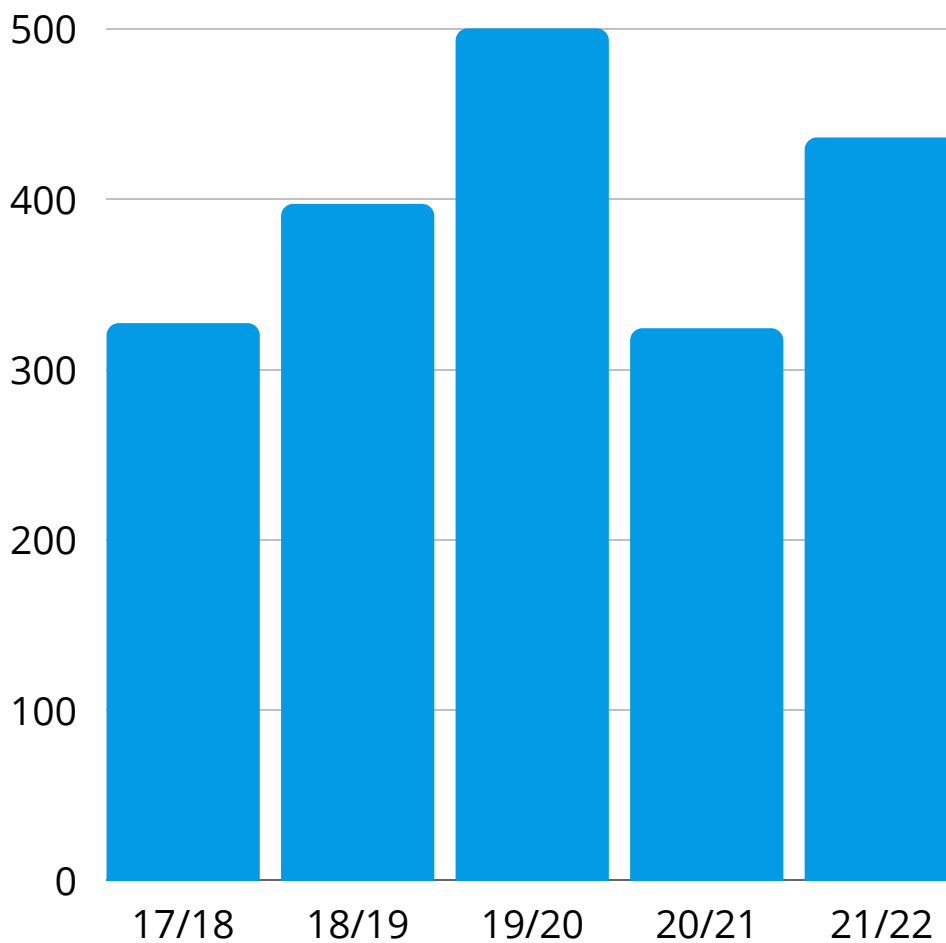
We continued our promotion of NHS Education for Scotland's online complaints training courses and Care Opinion's 'how to' sessions.

We continued to develop the patient feedback area on our intranet site to ensure staff had access to useful information, templates and guidance relating to complaints handling.

Complaints

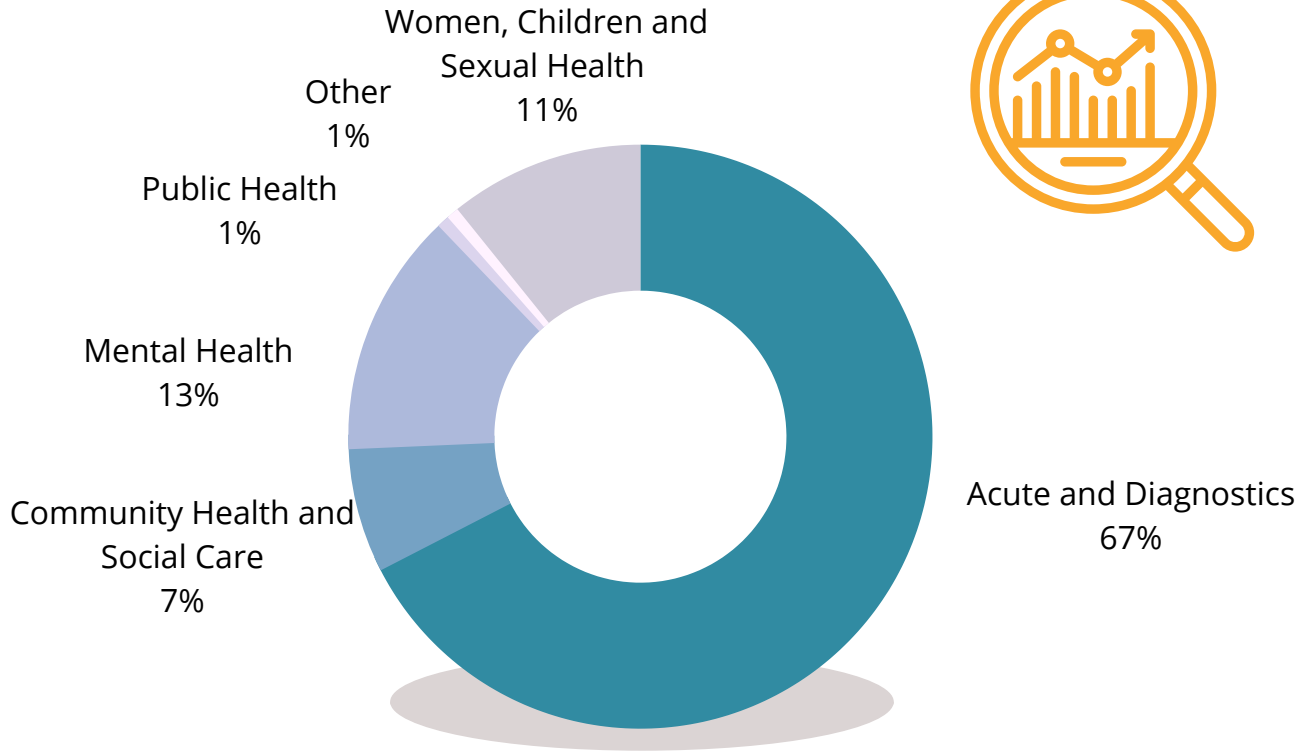
Indicator 4 - Complaints Received

We received **436 complaints** during 2021/22, which is higher than last year. We are seeing the number of complaints received return to pre-pandemic levels, which was expected. Where possible, we aim to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity and before they enter the complaints procedure.

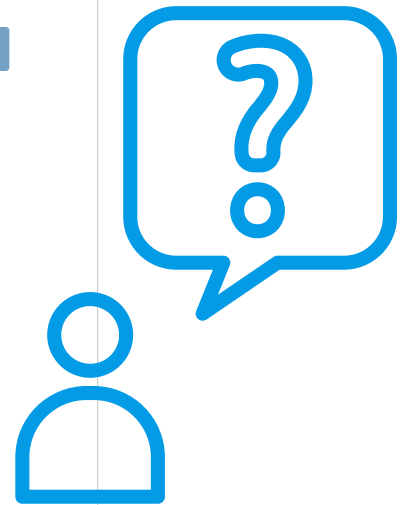
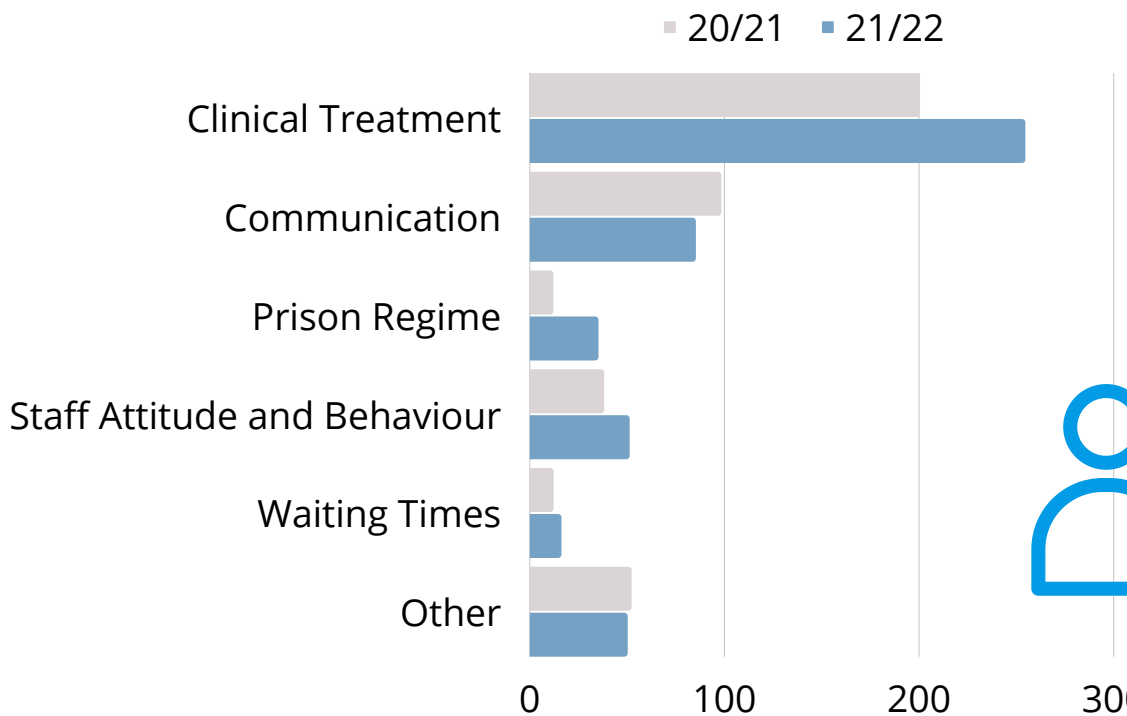


Complaints

The majority of the complaints we receive relate to Acute and Diagnostics, which is our largest Directorate.



When we record complaints, we identify themes using nationally agreed 'codes'. Some complaints identify several themes. The top themes for 2021/22 (those mentioned in more than 10 complaints) were:

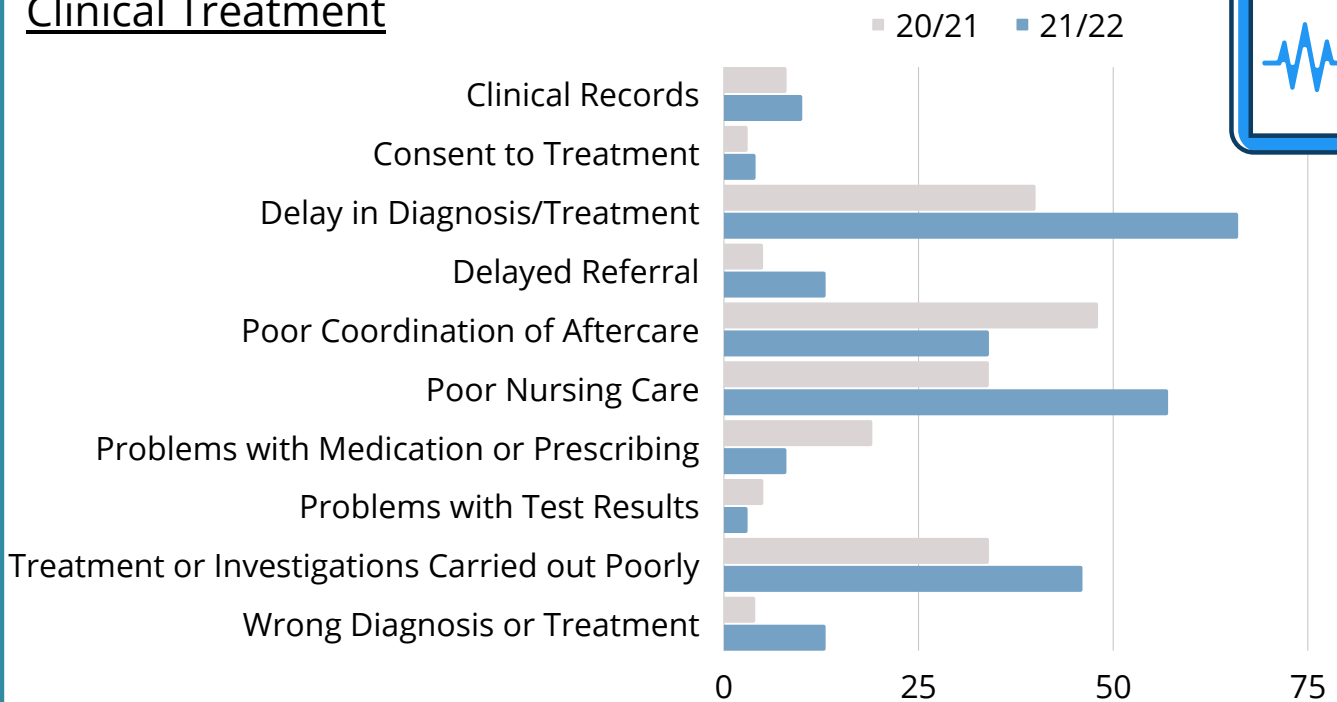


Those under 'other' covered a number of subjects relating to a wide variety of issues.

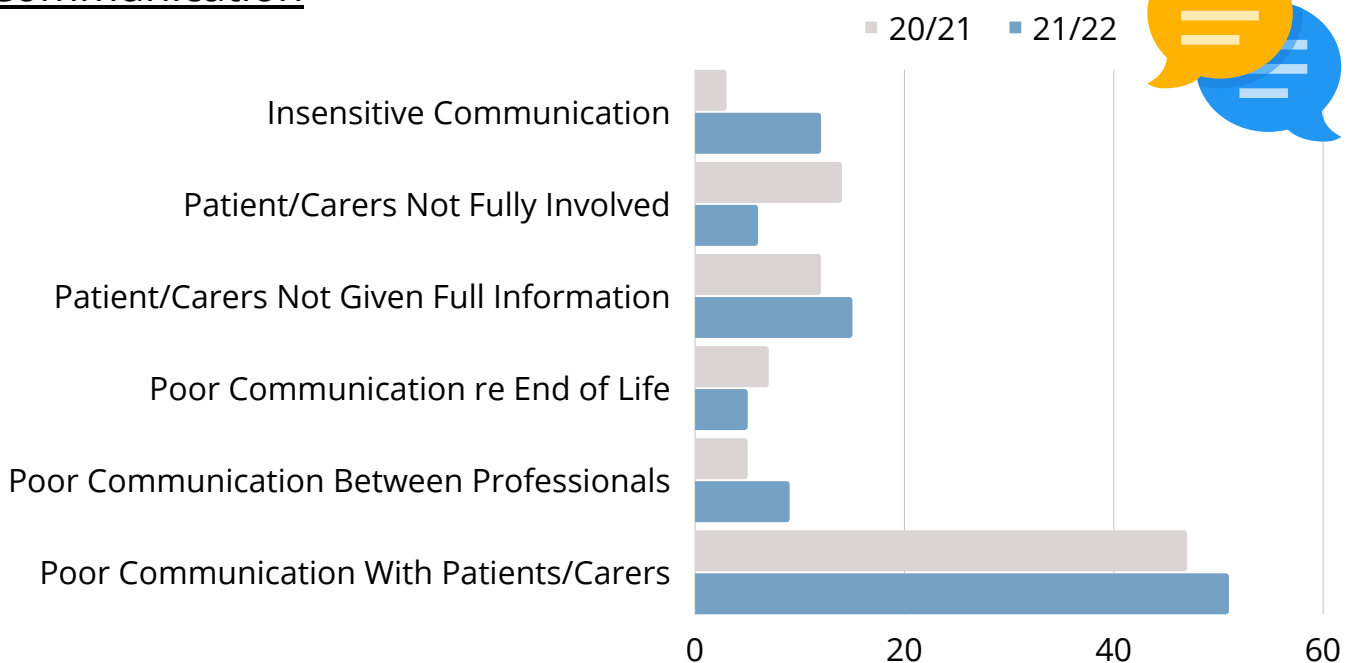
Complaints

Clinical Treatment and Communication were our top two themes over 2021/22, which is consistent with previous years. The issues raised under these headings can be further broken down as follows:

Clinical Treatment



Communication



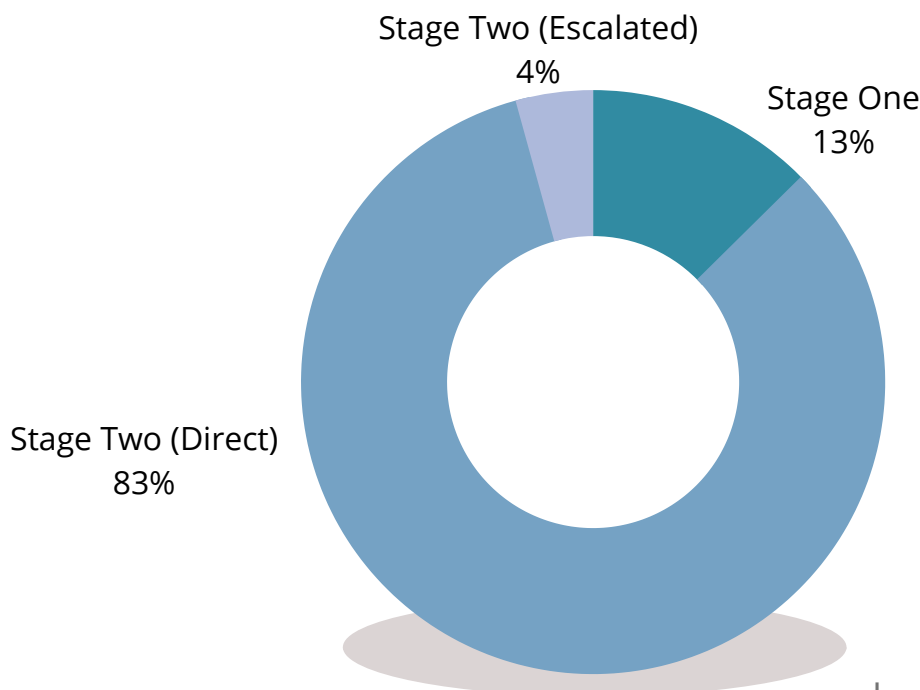
Complaints

Indicator 5 - Complaints Closed at Each Stage

NHS Boards in Scotland have a two stage complaints procedure. The first stage focuses on early resolution and the second stage provides the opportunity for detailed investigation of issues raised. Complaints can go directly to Stage Two or be escalated there after Stage One.



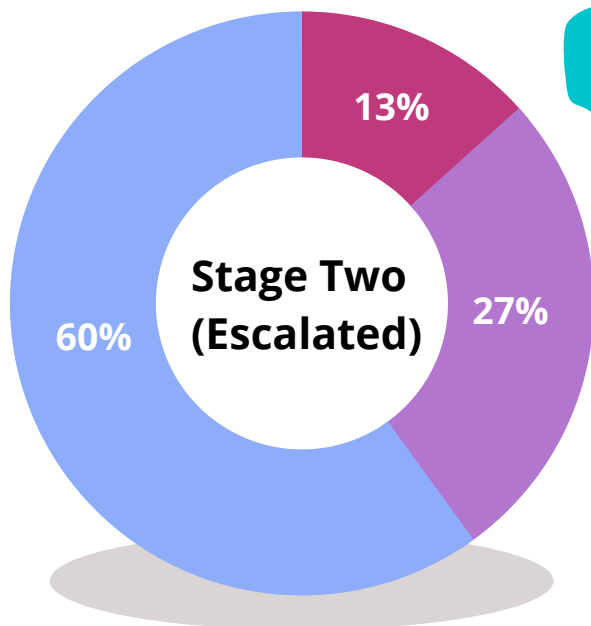
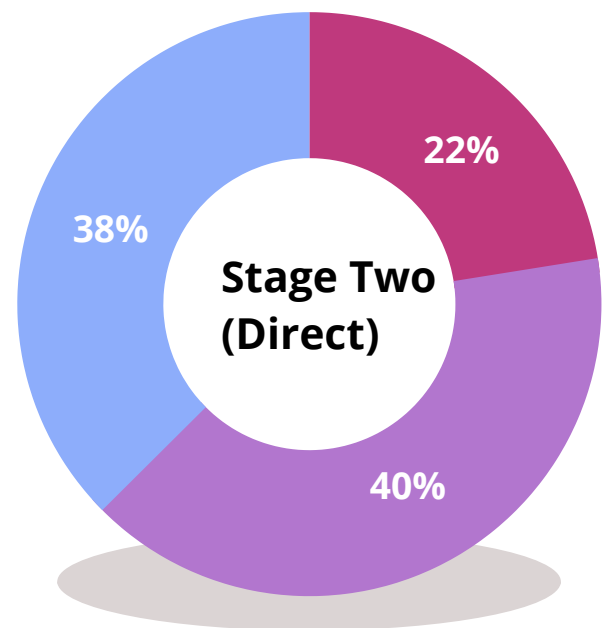
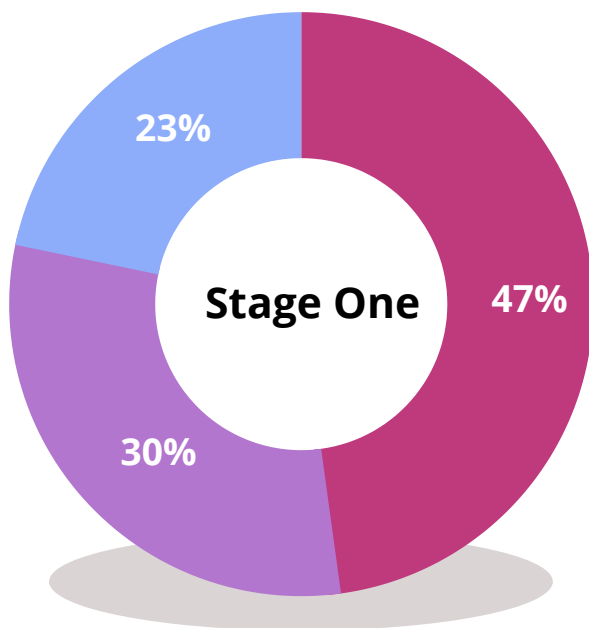
We responded to 397 complaints during the period, compared to 276 in the previous year. The majority of those (330) were complaints that went directly to Stage Two. We also responded to 50 Stage One complaints and 17 that were escalated to Stage Two. These numbers differ to complaints received, as some complaints remain 'live' at the end of the financial year.



Complaints

Indicator 6 - Complaint Outcomes

When we respond to a complaint, we provide an outcome of 'upheld', 'partially upheld' or 'not upheld'. The below details our outcomes for each Stage of the process.

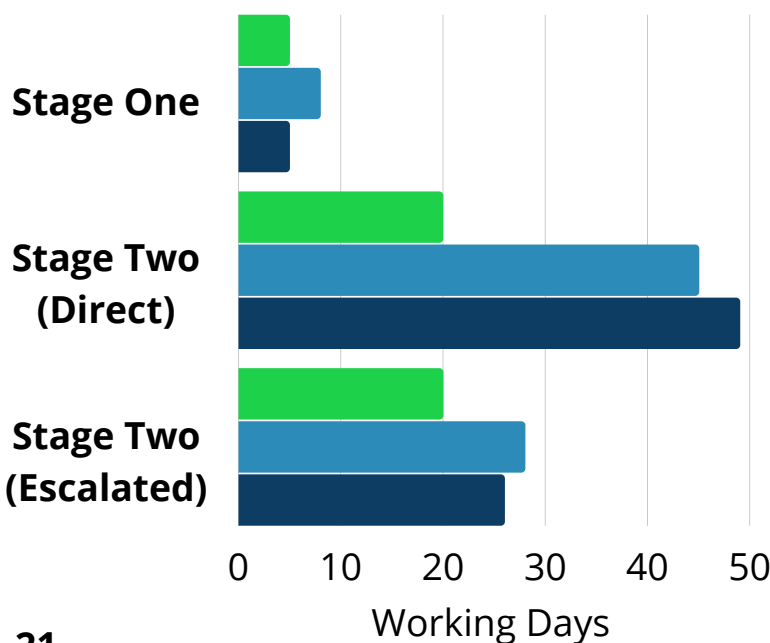
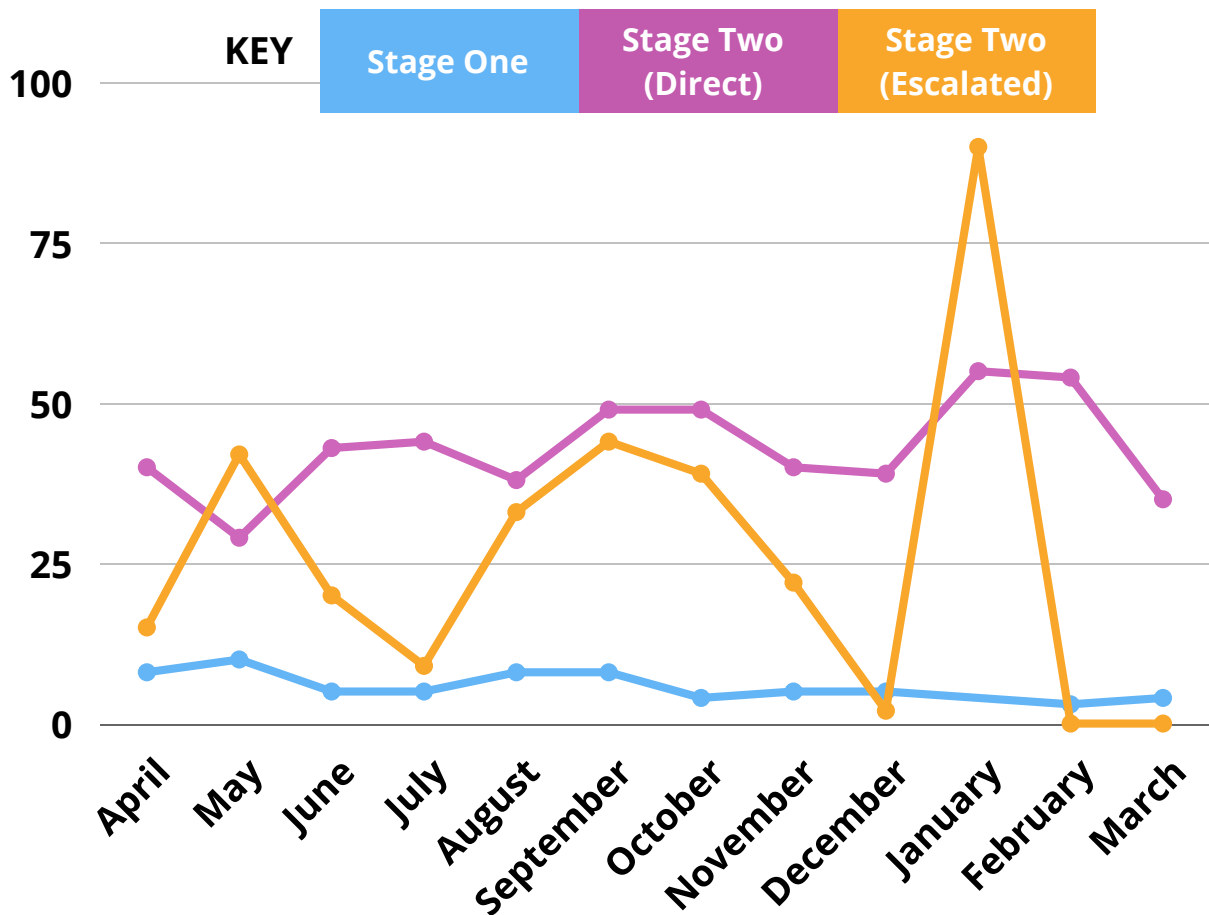


58% of our complaints were upheld or partially upheld which is a slight decrease on 60% from the previous year. We fully upheld 23% of complaints during this period, compared to 22% from the previous year. With partially upheld complaints decreasing from 38% to 35%.

Complaints

Indicator 7 - Average Response Times

The Complaints Handling Procedure requires Boards to respond to Stage One complaints within 5 working days and Stage Two complaints within 20 working days. The charts below show our median response times over the period.



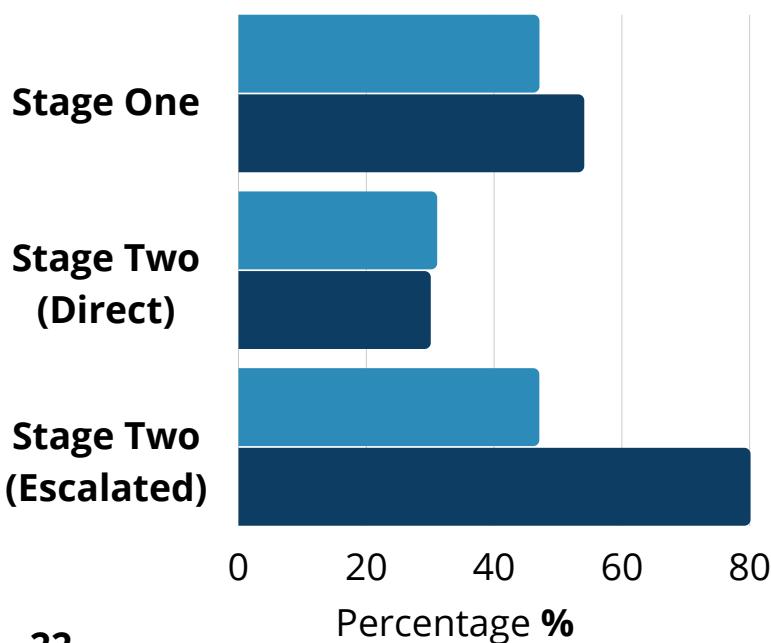
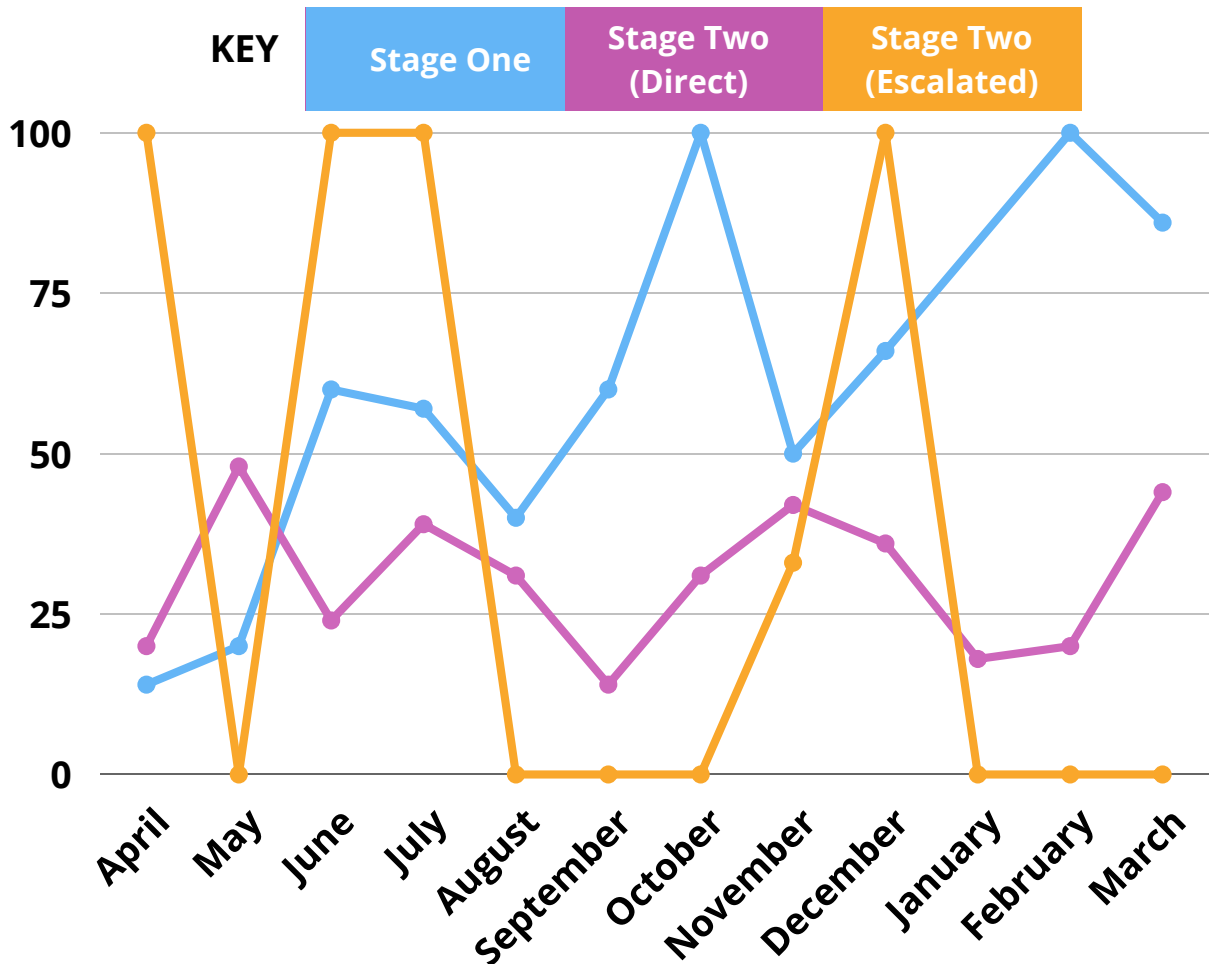
The chart to the left shows our response times for **this year** and **last year** against the **statutory response times**.

Our response times have increased for Stage Two Direct complaints, the stage at which most complaints are dealt with at. These delays in responding are as a direct result of the current pressures on services.

Complaints

Indicator 8 - Closed Within Timescale

The chart below demonstrates how many complaints we responded to within timescale during the period. Performance for Stage Two Escalated complaints fluctuates due to the low numbers.

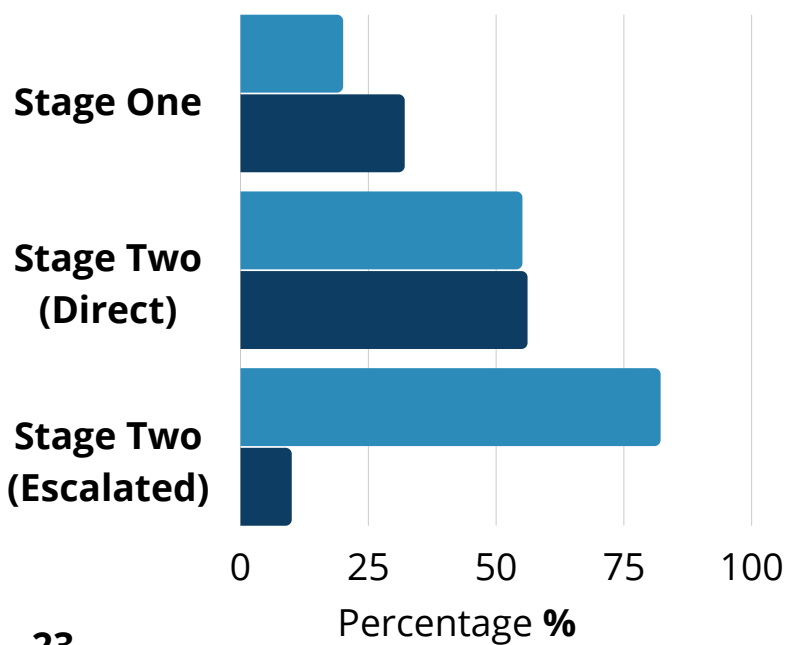
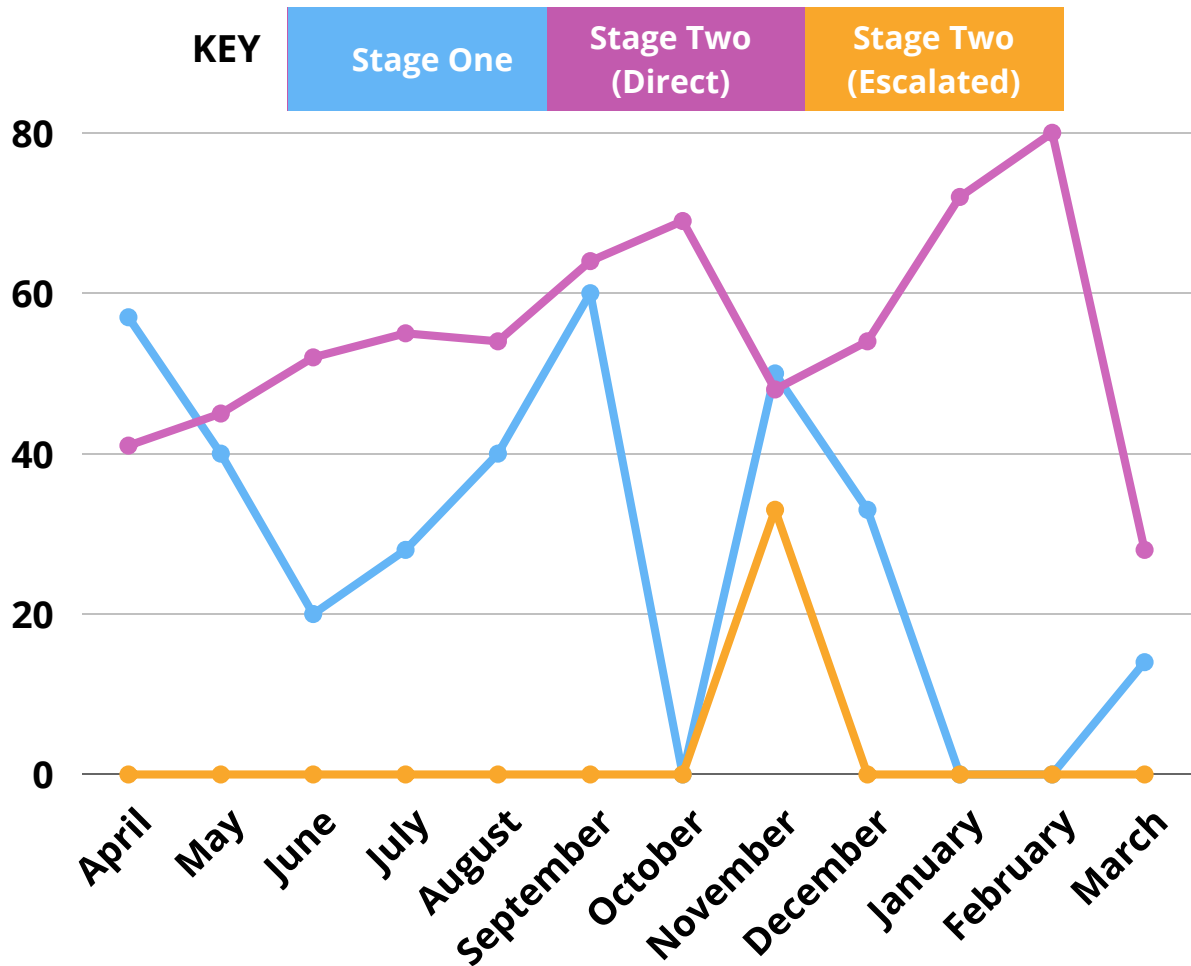


The chart to the left shows the percentage of complaints that were closed within timescales for **this year** and **last year**. We have responded to slightly less S2 Direct complaints within timescale this year compared to last. Again, this is directly linked to pandemic and capacity pressures.

Complaints

Indicator 9 - Number of Cases Extended

Where we are unable to meet timescales for complaints, we have the option to agree an extension with the complainant. This indicator shows the percentage of cases where an extension was put in place.



The chart to the left shows the percentage of complaints that had extensions agreed for **this year** and **last year**. Extension requests have remained similar for Stage Two Direct complaints. We have seen an increase for Stage One which reflects the challenges of the short timescales.



Complaints

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Individuals who are dissatisfied with the Board's handling of their concerns can refer their complaint for further investigation to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

The SPSO contacted us about **26** cases during the period.

The Board has received an outcome for **18** of those cases.

15 of those cases did not progress to an SPSO investigation.

2 cases were deferred back to the Board for a further response to be provided.

3 cases were investigated and they were all upheld.

If the SPSO investigate and uphold a complaint, they typically make recommendations to assist the Board to ensure learning, improvement and where possible remedy. The SPSO place timescales on those recommendations and require evidence to confirm that they have been undertaken. The case remains open with the SPSO until they have confirmed that they are satisfied with that evidence. The SPSO publish all of their Decision Letters on their website.

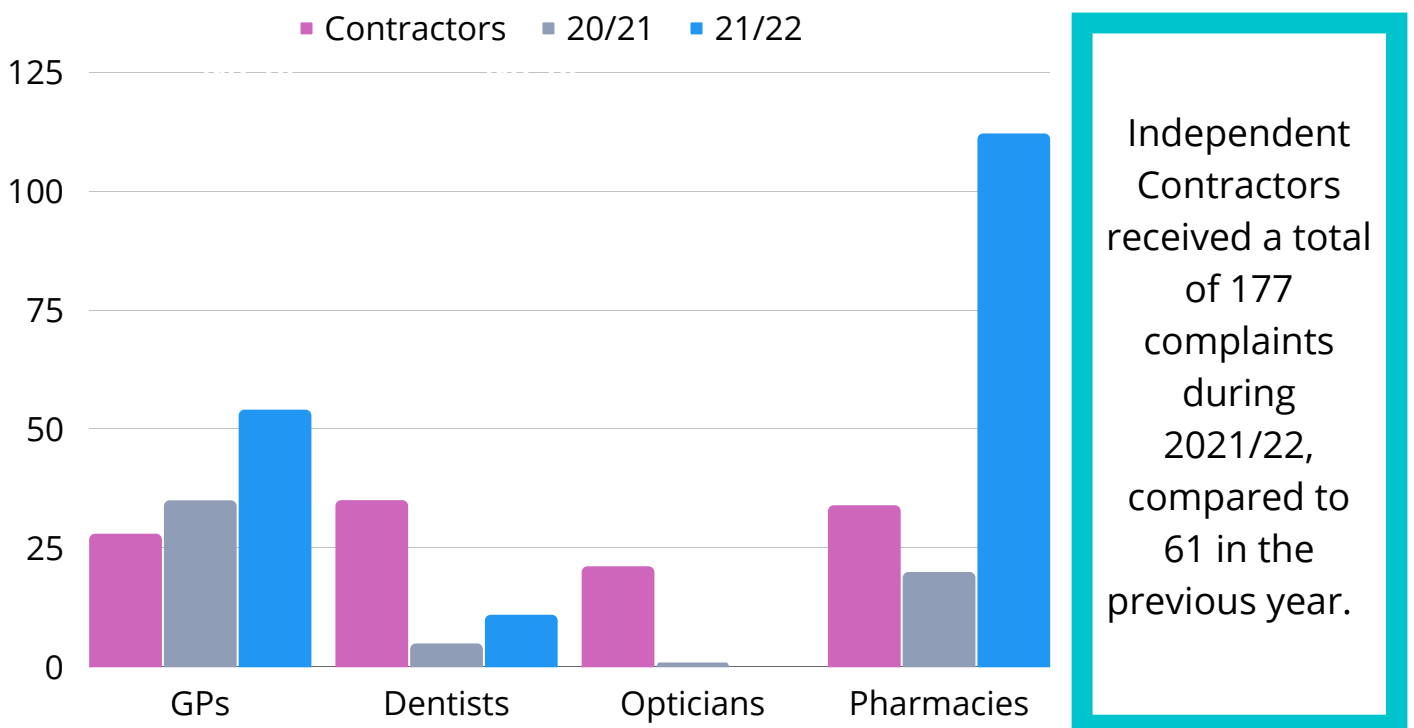
For more information on the SPSO please visit www.sps.org.uk

Complaints

Family Health Services, Independent Contractors Complaints

Local GPs, Dentists, Opticians and Pharmacists provide the Board with monthly performance information relating to the number of complaints they have received.

In accordance with the Complaints Directions, relevant NHS Bodies have a responsibility to gather and review information from their own services and their service providers. Service providers also have a duty to supply this information to their relevant NHS Body as soon as is reasonably practicable after the end of the month to which it relates.



The number of independent contractor complaints rose significantly during the period, particularly for pharmacies. The majority of the complaints received by contractors related to dissatisfaction with access to services, which was largely linked to challenges associated with the pandemic e.g. infection control arrangements and staffing pressures.

Complaints

Prison Service Complaints

NHS Dumfries and Galloway is responsible for the provision of healthcare to prisoners at HMP Dumfries. Where Boards are responsible for delivering health care within a prison, there is a requirement to provide narrative on complaints handling specific to that setting.

We received **38** complaints about Prison Healthcare during 2021/22.

That is significantly more than the 28 complaints received during 2021/22.

6 of those complaints were withdrawn before a response was issued.

Most complaints related to the Prison regime or clinical treatment.

The complaints were all responded to within timescale.

The outcome for each of the 32 complaints responded to was 'not upheld'. This is consistent with previous years, where the vast majority of prison healthcare complaints are 'not upheld'.



Complaints

Accountability and Governance

We produce a number of internal and publicly available performance reports (available on our website). These reports aid monitoring of our performance against the performance indicators set out by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. They also support accountability and governance, as well as helping us to learn and improve.



Weekly reports on new and 'live' complaints are provided to Senior Managers and Feedback Leads.



Bi-monthly reports are provided to Board and Healthcare Governance Committee, detailing performance against the national indicators.



An annual report is published publicly each year, and formally submitted to the Scottish Government and Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Conclusion

Whilst we have a number of areas of good practice in relation to patient feedback, we are aware that we could do more. With that in mind, we will continue to look for opportunities over the coming year to improve how we gather, manage and learn from feedback. We will focus on achieving early resolution to issues and where that is not possible, we remain committed to ensuring that the complaints procedure is as supportive as possible for everyone involved, including patients, Carers, families and staff.

Once again, we'd like to thank everyone that has taken the time to provide feedback to the Board over the last year. Please continue to share your stories with us. Thank you.